S.No.	Name of Schemes
15.	Development of Medicinal & Aromatic Plants
16.	Use of Plastics in Agriculture
17.	Development of Commercial Floriculture
18.	Development of Mushroom
19.	Integrated Development of Tropical, Arid Temperate Zone Fruits
20.	Intergrated Development Programme of Cashewnut
21.	Development of Root & Tuber Crops
22.	Development of Betelvinc
23.	Development of Vegetables
24.	Integrated Development of Cocoa
25.	Integrated Development of Spices

Criteria for Fixing Minimum Support Price of Cotton

152. SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: SHRI N.R. DASARI:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a)what is the minimum support price fixed for cotton for the 1996, 1997 and 1998 seasons and what are the criteria adopted in fixing this price;

(b)whether it is a fact that the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices has been using the outdated data relating to the cost to production in just one or two States to fix the minimum support price as has been complained by the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh; and

(c)if so, what is Government's reaction thereto and steps proposed to be taken to make the minimum support price more real and remunerative to the farmers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) The Minimum Support Prices (MSPs) fixed for two basic varieties of cotton during the last three years are given below:

Year	Basic variety	MSP fixed by the Govt. (Rs/Qtls.
1995-96	F414/H-777	1150
	H-4	1350
1996-97	F-414/H-777	1180
	H-4	1380
1997-98	F-414/4-777	1330
	H-4	1530

On the basis of price differentials of these two basic varieties, the Ministry of Textiles fixed the MSPs for crops, the Commission forAgricuItural Costs & Prices (CACP) takes into account a number of factors viz. cost of production, changes in input prices, input/output price parity, trends in market prices, demand and supply situation partiy between prices paid and prices received by the farmers, international prices of the commodities and effect on industrial cost structure, general price level and cost of living.

(b) and (c) While recommending the MSPs, the CACP takes into account the cost of production data generated under the Comprehensive Scheme for Studying the Cost of Cultivation of Principal Crops. The latest cost data generated under the scheme are up-dated by CACP by taking into account the changes in the prices of variable inputs. In fixing the MSPs it is also ensured that it covers the cost of production and also provides a reasonable margin of profit to give incentive to the farmers for investment and adoption of improved technology.

Failure of Mango Crop in Andhra Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh

153. DR. D. VENKATESHWAR RAO: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been a drastic failure of the mango crop especially in Andhra Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh;

if so, the reasons therefor; and

the steps propsed to check such total crop failures?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOM.PAL): (a) and (b) No, Sir. However, there has been less production of mango crop in parts of Andhra Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. The low production in Andhra Pradesh is attributed mainly to the adverse weather conditions like extended rainy season, failure in pollination and pollen germination. In the case of Uttar Pradesh low production is attributed mainly to the off year in the alternate year bearing cycle of mango crop aggravated by adverse whether conditions like prolonged cold spell during the flowering season, coupled with rains and occasional hail storms during the post flowering season.

(c) The concerned State Governments have taken a number of steps to avoid crop failure. These steps include organising training programmes to the orchardists in adopting integrated pest management, plant protection measure, ensure optimum supply of inputs like insecticides, pesticides, water for irrigation and power supply.

Committee to Study Poor Financial Condition of Farmers

154. SHRI KULDIP NAYYAR: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a)whether Government propose to appoint a Committee to study the bad financial condition of farmers in the country in view of suicides committed by them in certain States during the last two years;

(b)if so, by when; and

(c)if not, what measures Government propose to take to provide easy credit to farmers to save them from borrowing from money lenders?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) to (c) No, Sir. The Government have, however, constituted a Study Group in the context of the distress caused by indebtedness of farmers in Andhra Pradesh. Briefly, the Group will

(d)examine in depth the nature and extend of indebtedness among the farmers in the State and the magnitude of its incidence particularly in respect of poor farmers,

(e)identify constraints, if any, standing in the way of greater institutionalisation of the flow of rural credit in the State and

(f) suggest measures for increasing the role of public financial institutions in the purveyal of credit to the agricultural and allied sectors.

With a view to improving the flow of credit to farmers in the agriculture and allied sectors, following steps have been taken:—

(i) A proposal has been initiated for revamping of Cooperative Credit Structure.

(ii) The State Governments have been advised to constitute Standing Committees to assess the requirements of agricultural Credit for the Rabi and Kharif seasons and to review the performance thereof.

(iii) Steps have been initiated for reformulation of Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act, with a view to restoring the autonomy of the cooperative institutions.

(iv) Action has been initiated to amend the National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC) Act 1962 to give the NCDC greater operational freedom and access to resources.

(v) For maintaining increased credit flow at the ground level and ensuring adequate coverage of